

MINUTES OF DOT-AGC BRIDGE DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

The DOT-AGC Joint Bridge Design Subcommittee met on August 11, 2004. Those in attendance were:

Berry Jenkins	Manager of Highway Heavy Division, Carolinas Branch AGC (Co-Chairman)
Allen Raynor	Assistant State Bridge Design Engineer (Co-Chairman)
Paul Lambert	Structure Design Project Engineer
Tom Koch	Structure Design Project Engineer
Ron Hancock	State Bridge Construction Engineer
Chris Britton	Taylor and Murphy Construction Co.
Richard Holshouser	Sanford Contractors, Inc.
Mark Lively	Crowder Construction
Michael Dane	Dane Construction, Inc.
Rodger Rochelle	State Alternate Delivery Systems Engineer
Gichuru Muchane	Structure Design Engineer

During the review of the June 7th, 2004 meeting minutes, the following items were discussed:

1. Welded Hoops

Mr. Hancock reported the Materials and Tests Unit had received samples of welded hoops from Gerdau Ameristeel and that he will report back on their test results at the next meeting.

The minutes of the June 7th, 2004 meeting were approved.

The following items of new business were discussed:

1. Contract times

Mr. Hancock reported that a contractor had raised the issue of contract times that are longer than the time necessary to complete the project. Mr. Hancock requested comments from contractors on whether their contract times have been too long.

Mr. Holshouser stated, and other contractors agreed, that most contractors would like to have a flexible contract starting time. He also stated that shorter contract times would increase the cost of the projects.

Mr. Dane stated that it is becoming more difficult to complete projects on time because of moratoriums, more staged construction projects, and delays from numerous sub-contractors.

The contractors stated that in general they did not think that contract times were too long. However, they agreed that on a few contracts, usually smaller cored slab bridge or bridge replacement projects, they have had more time to complete the project than was necessary.

Mr. Hancock reiterated that he understood that contractors would like more floating start dates and that road closures allowed contractors to complete projects in a shorter period.

2. *Railroad Flagmen*

Mr. Hancock reported that Norfolk Southern typically issues flagman duties to unionized maintenance employees. As a result of a downsized maintenance staff, there is now a shortage of available flagmen. Norfolk Southern is planning to hire 5 additional flagmen. In the interim, contractors are required to put requests for flagmen in writing as soon as possible with a schedule indicating specific needs. DOT is in close communication with Norfolk Southern on this matter and is exploring options such as sharing a flagman for projects that are in the same vicinity. Mr. Hancock wanted contractors to be aware of the situation so that they can plan accordingly. He requested the contractors to contact him if there are any flagman related problems on the projects under construction.

3. *Project Special Provision - Protection of Traffic*

Mr. Hancock distributed a draft of the revised project special provision on protection of traffic. Mr. Holshouser inquired if the special provision applied to both steel and concrete girders and Mr. Hancock responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Holshouser stated that bracing the first girder was often the most challenging. He inquired if bracing by the cable method, which was approved by the railroad companies, was acceptable. Mr. Hancock replied that the DOT would prefer traffic was shut down for a period long enough to permit the contractor to place at least two girders which could then be braced together. However, he added that during the period that only one girder was in place, the contractor was responsible for its stability and should devise some method for adequately bracing the single girder.

Additional discussion on the special provision recommended clarifying the document to reflect two distinct issues - bracing of girders and protection of traffic. *Mr. Hancock stated that this clarification will be incorporated in the special provision.*

4. *Project Special Provision – Crane Safety*

Mr. Hancock distributed a draft project special provision on crane safety. He corrected the implementation date for the certified crane operators (CCO) program to January 1, 2006.

Mr. Holshouser suggested allowing more than 2 crane certification programs. He stated that certification from a limited number of programs may require proficiency in cranes that some contractors never operate. For this reason he suggested that company specific programs be accredited to certify crane operators. Details such as who would accredit the company specific programs were not resolved.

Mr. Dane pointed out that all contractors would have to comply with OSHA requirements in a couple of years. He noted that the OSHA requirements might be more stringent for crane operators and therefore the industry needed to start preparing for compliance.

Mr. Jenkins stated that the documentation of qualifications of the “Competent Person” responsible for crane safety and lifting operations may be open to some problems depending on format and degree of detail presented. He requested that NCDOT provide a checklist of training and other requirements.

Mr. Hancock stated that contractors should send any other comments on the special provision to him. He added that he expected the document to be implemented by January 2005.

5. *Other*

- i. Mr. Hancock distributed the Bridge Maintenance Unit's current projected letting list. He requested contractors review this list in conjunction with the TIP letting list so that conflicts, such as detour routes, could be avoided.

Mr. Jenkins suggested making the list more readily accessible and available, such as on a website, for the benefit of small and disadvantaged businesses. Mr. Hancock stated that he would let Steve Varnedoe know that the list is a helpful planning tool for contractors.

- ii. Mr. Rochelle reintroduced himself to the committee in his new role as the State Alternate Delivery Systems Engineer. He provided a short overview of the functions of the unit.

Mr. Rochelle stated that the Value Engineering group was one of the groups in the unit and he requested contractors comment on their experiences with value engineering proposals (VEP). Contractors stated that the VEP process was too lengthy and often it was unclear what qualified for a VEP and who decides that it is a VEP. Mr. Jenkins stated that the VE process presented opportunities for partnering between the contractors and the DOT. Mr. Rochelle stated that the feedback provided would be useful in their review of the VEP process.

- iii. Mr. Jenkins announced that Mr. Dane will be rotating off the AGC-DOT committee. Mr. Michael Dirkson of Granite Construction will replace him.
- iv. Mr. Hancock announced that a new Bridge Construction Engineer, Mr. Lee Puckett, will now oversee projects in Divisions 6 & 7 and that Mr. Billy Trivette will oversee projects in Divisions 8 & 9.

6. *Next Meeting*

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 7th, 2004 in the Structure Design Unit conference Room C.